

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER VI. "LOVE WILL FIND OUT THE WAY."

THAT night at the theatre had been an event. But gradually, she knew not how, the manner and all the surroundings of her life changed and changed for Phœbe, until it seemed to her that she had always been Phœbe Doyle. Of course she thought she knew perfectly well that she had once been Phœbe Burden, who lived with the Nelsons; but knowing a thing is one thing, and feeling it is another. When stay-at-home people have been a week out of England, their familiar home seems to belong not merely to another country, but to another world, so far away does it feel; and the foreign ways are all the more real for being so new and so strange.

Nothing in the old life had ever been quite real, seeing that it had been nothing so much as a back garden of dreamland. But the play, so long as she attended to it, had been real, and the new life was so unlike the old as to force itself upon all the sense of reality that nature had given her; to wake up, in fact, her senses from their sleepy stagnation. Harland Terrace is a clean and pleasant street in a western district, which people who wish to flatter its residents address as "Hyde Park" by courtesy, and with a little more show of reason than in the case of yet more distant regions. The rents were high, the tenants rich, and the houses large enough to hold the whole Nelson family twice over. There were rooms, and to spare, to give Phœbe three entirely to herself—her bedroom, of

course, and a day-room, and another little room for odds and ends of things and uses. Her father also set up a sacred den, and there were the drawing-room, and dining-room, and morning-room left for them to meet in and for company who never came, and enough bedrooms to make a full house instead of an empty one. The stairs were so low and so broad as to seem to Phœbe, used to something like a ladder, scarcely to be stairs at all, and there was a small greenhouse at the back waiting for flowers. The furniture had once appeared to be on a scale of no less magnificence and elegance, though few women would have called it either the one or the other. It was comfortable in detail, but rather bare and tasteless in general effect; as might be expected from the arrangements of an old Indian who had been used to the life of a bachelor and was in a hurry to get the business of furnishing over and done. There had been very little planning of rooms, and none of that lingering over this and that idea at decorators' and upholsterers', which cheats one into the half belief that their works are things to be personally proud of as well as to be personally liable for. Phœbe's taste, whenever it found expression, was rather wild; her father's was decidedly stiff and hard—so the result was by no means successful to the orthodox eye.

However, she was used to it all now—to the house, to its furniture, and to the art of living therein, without having as yet been screwed down into the groove of its undeniable monotony. There was still a sort of dignified excitement about the aristocratic process of coming down to a late and leisurely breakfast without having first to take in the milk, and sometimes to

pay the milkman, and often to run out in bad weather to buy a red herring or a quarter of a pound of tea, while the boys were squabbling over their mixed-up boots, and the fire refused to make the water boil. She had closed her eyes to the old ways with the art of the ostrich; she was glad enough to open them wide to the new. Her father also took to the earliest home comforts of the day very kindly, and rather lingered over a breakfast-table at the head of which a woman sat for the first time since he had been a boy. He was not talkative, and read the Times, more or less, throughout the meal, but he was always gravely good-tempered, and always pleased and ready to listen and respond whenever Phœbe happened to think of something to say. There was nothing that could be called conversation, but the barrier between their thoughts was not thicker than is usual between a father and a grown-up daughter, who must naturally be farther apart than even a husband and wife can contrive to be. After breakfast her father retired to his own den, dividing the bulk of the day between unknown and solitary pursuits, accompanied by much tobacco, at home, and irregular wanderings out of doors, so that Phœbe was left mistress of herself till dinner-time. But she had been used to that in her old home, and understood the art of doing nothing without weariness perfectly well. It was of nobody like Phœbe Doyle that were written those lines of half-wisdom:

Ah, wretched and too solitary he
That loves not his own company!
He'll feel the weight of 't many a day,
Unless he call in Sin and Vanity
To help to bear 't away.

In spite of the nature of her bringing up, she did not make friends of her servants—not because she was too proud, but because she could not help being more than half afraid of them, especially of the highly respectable person who had been chosen to act as Phœbe's particular maid, to attend to the linen and the sewing, and, in general, to relieve the mistress of the house of all the troubles of housekeeping. There was no man-servant, and for that matter there was no need of one except for unnecessary show, nor had Phœbe's father yet set up a carriage. But there was no lack of service, as became the household of an old Indian, and the maids were looked after, more or less, by Mrs. Hassock as Phœbe's *maitresse du palais*. She was one of those people who are apparently born to be called

"Mrs.," whether married or single, and are never, even when in service, roughly called by an unprefaced surname. In all visible ways Mrs. Hassock was a treasure. She moved with a staid and noiseless dignity that befitted an earl's housekeeper, never dropped an H, never chattered, and seemed to have no friends—followers were out of the question, for she made no pretensions to be young, and was as hard-featured as honesty. Moreover, if she soon learned how to rule the house, it was with an invisible sceptre. No rare order or suggestion of Phœbe's was ever disregarded, and Mrs. Hassock never gave what were her own orders as her own. Phœbe felt really afraid of this duenna-like personage, for whom she found several prototypes from her acquaintance with the Spain of fiction; and so she thought it her duty to dislike her a little. But never did duenna—if such she were—ever give less cause for disliking. All she seemed to live for was to make the wheels of Sixteen, Harland Terrace, run smoothly.

Phœbe did not sing; did not paint; nor play the piano; nor write sonnets nor novels; nor ride, nor make calls nor receive them; nor employ her fingers with what women, for some jocular reason, call work; nor perform one of the duties belonging to the station of life into which she had been called. But, to repeat it, she found it infinitely easier to get through her days than one could have believed. How many hours were there to dispose of after all? It was fully eleven o'clock before the day began, and the dinner-hour was six and bed-time eleven, which, making all due deductions for meals, and for the times that even the busiest people have to spend in their dressing-rooms, left but some nine hours, at most, out of the four-and-twenty to be idle in. One must be a cormorant for work to be incapable of doing nothing for eight or nine hours a day. There were Kensington Gardens, with their real trees and their real people, and the streets with their shops, and it never appeared to occur to her father that there was the least peril or impropriety in her going out alone. Sometimes he went out with her himself, but not often, and she very much preferred the solitary walks in which she could think her own thoughts, such as they were, and put herself into the places of the chance people she saw and make up histories of them. In the evening, after dinner, when her father always stayed at home, even his companion-

ship, after an unaccompanied day, was relief and change enough to make some three hours, with the help of tea-making and with the nearing prospect of bed-time, pass not unpleasantly. But in the day-time it sometimes rained, or was misty, or going out was, for some other reason, impossible. And presently, as time went on, Phoebe discovered an amusement at home that proved so fascinating as to make her less and less disposed for the shop windows and for the silent company of the world out of doors. Considering that she was a grown-up young woman, it was childish enough. She had found among her father's exceedingly few books—for through all his changes of life a few books had still clung to him, and a few more had found their way about in the unaccountable way that books have of gathering in the most unlikely corners—an odd volume of plays. It was a collection of acting editions of some dozen stray tragedies and comedies of various authors, cut to the same size and shape by an unskilful book-binder, and bearing on the first page of the first play, in faded ink and highly-flourished letters, the name of "Stella Fitzjames." With the experience of Olga upon her, she first read the plays, and then acted them aloud to an imaginary audience in her own room, taking all the parts, but especially those belonging to the leading lady. It was better than novel-reading. And the nearer she knew the plays by heart, the more fascinating it grew. It allowed her to throw herself into the thoughts and feelings of other people and to make a stage of her life, better even than the old back-garden, which had dropped out of so much as her dreams.

Of her dead mother she never found a sign nor heard a word. She would have asked questions had she dared; but instinct told her that this was sacred, or at least forbidden, ground. No doubt her mother's death had been a tragedy so deep as to make memory torture and words profane—a wound beyond the power of time to heal. Silence upon such a subject increased her awe for the strong man who had suffered so terribly for such a cause. Yet it seemed strange that an only child should be left ignorant by a widowed father of so much as her mother's name. And yet, after all, it did not seem strange. Stranger things happen in real plays every day. So she went on with her play-acting, and found in it a very real world, fully as large as any back-garden in the world. No

doubt the last scene of the last act would come all in good time.

One morning, after breakfast, her father went into his own room as usual and had lighted his first cheroot, when, against all the routine of the household, Mrs. Hassock tapped at the door and entered with hardly a formal waiting for leave. She was always as dignified and stately as a tall and portly person and a black dress could make her, but this morning she looked as proudly important as if she were the bearer of bad news.

"Well, Mrs. Hassock, what is it?" asked Doyle rather impatiently, for he had of late been drifting into grooves that a trifle disturbs.

"I have come, sir," said she in a voice as solemn as a funeral, "to say a word about Miss Doyle."

"About Phoebe—Miss Doyle? What on earth should you want to say about Miss Doyle? Do you mean to say you're not satisfied? Then——"

"There it is, sir. I'm not satisfied. I've not been satisfied for a good while. No, sir, I don't mean about the place. I'm not satisfied about Miss Doyle."

"Good Heavens! Do you mean to say anything's the matter with her? That she's not well? Why, she looks better than when—when we came here, a hundred times."

"Oh, sir, it's like enough she'd look the better for being back from India. She was bound to look yellow enough then. But looks are as deceitful as males. Of course she'd look her very best. Young ladies in that state of mind mostly do."

"Oh, if you don't mean she's ill—— But what do you mean? I don't know anything about states of mind. You've got something to say—nonsense, I suppose. Have it out at once. What have you got to say about Miss Doyle?"

"There it is, sir. Of course, it isn't to be expected that a gentleman, with other things to think of, would take notice of such things. But things mayn't be noticed, and yet they mayn't be nonsense, all the same. I know what I'm going to say might be called free. But if a woman isn't free to speak her mind, then all I can say is, I don't know what freedom means. It's been on my mind a long time."

"For Heaven's sake throw it off then, and as quickly as you can. What has been on your mind?"

"Why, how it's not good, nor natural, nor proper for a young lady that's grown

up beyond a governess—not that I think much of governesses; they mostly know more than's good for them, and their sense is too uncommon for me—but for a young lady that's outgrown her back-board to be mewed and cooped up like an abbess in a harem. She's bound to mope after company of her own sex, let alone the other——”

“Yes, let alone the other, Mrs. Hassock, if you please,” said Doyle with real impatience. “I knew you were going to show me where you keep some mare's-nest or other, when you began. I don't keep company, as you knew very well when you came into my house. Miss Doyle has never been used to company since she was born. I lived by myself in India, as many people have to do out there.”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” asked Mrs. Hassock, “but was Miss Doyle born in India? She speaks uncommonly little of the country, to be sure, and I've known the ways of Indian ladies, and what they want, and what they've been accustomed to, and Miss Doyle's like for all the world as if she'd never seen the outside of London. As I was saying to Ellen only on Saturday, or as I ought to say, as Ellen was saying to me when we were sorting out the wardrobe, she hasn't an Indian shawl.”

Mrs. Hassock was far too grave and dignified to be suspected of impertinence or curiosity. Her master could only feel annoyed that even so innocent an imposture as his should not prove wholly plain-sailing. Phoebe was ostensibly from India. What could signify to a mortal soul the unsolvable problem of where she had really been born?

“I never listen to gossip,” said he shortly. “I suppose my daughter's shawls are entirely her own affair. Is that all?”

But Mrs. Hassock was obviously not to be dismissed until she had spoken out the whole of her mind. To give her credit, it was an indulgence to which she was by no means prone, and she had evidently in the present case set herself the task less as a pleasure than as a duty.

“No, sir,” said she. “It's not good for a young lady to be shut up in a house all alone with nobody to speak to and nothing to do. Of course, there's yourself, sir; but I remember I didn't call my own father much company in particular, when I was a young girl. Lord! you may love your father or your mother as much as you like, but there's thousands of little things, and all as harmless as doves, that a girl wants to say to somebody—and a father won't do.

If she can't say them out in a wholesome way, mark my words, sir, they'll strike in like pimples; and what's to happen then? You'll want a doctor, or a sensible woman to say. She'll shut herself up with books, and that's bad for the brains. I've seen girls muddled out with reading, till they'd no more brains left than a cheese. And if they get sick of that rubbish, and aren't looked after, then they go walking out like a school without a mistress, and only one girl. And then, if they're not as plain as a pikestaff——”

Her increasingly solemn manner was beginning to have some sort of effect upon him. After all, he felt, what did he know about girls? Had he really made a mistake in arranging her life so as to keep her away from every possible influence of harm?

“Well?” he asked, in a severe tone that had no effect upon Mrs. Hassock whatever. “I suppose you mean well; so I will let you see, once for all, that you are wrong. I do not interfere with her in any way. There are the theatres—she might go to one every night if she pleased——”

“And, begging your pardon, sir, it's clear, as she doesn't, that Miss Doyle don't please. And little wonder there, say I—to be cooped up in a box, and not so free as when she's at home, with nobody to look at her clothes. That night she did go, she didn't come back as if she'd enjoyed herself more than a herring on a hill, as one may say. Only if she don't enjoy so much as that, she'll find out something, or else something'll find out her. There's other folk than young ladies that have eyes in their heads, and tongues in their teeth, to take their walks abroad.”

“Do you wish to stay in this place, Mrs. Hassock?” said Doyle in a very different tone.

“Certainly, sir,” said she. “I'm satisfied now I've spoke my mind, and washed my hands.”

“Then, remember this, that you are not engaged to watch over Miss Doyle. You have forgotten your place so far as to dare to hint to me that my daughter is not to be trusted alone.”

“There it is, sir. There's nobody fit to be trusted alone—not one. Not till she's fifty if she's a day, and not too often then. It's just being left alone that makes girls go wild. Only, of course, if I'm not to speak, it's nothing to me. So when any more shabby young men that don't make their hairdressers' fortunes come moon-raking up and down the terrace, and giving

a shilling—which is part of their shabbiness—to housemaids and such like to put letters into young ladies' own hands, I'm to see that their bidding's done. Very well, sir, I will; and if the letter's to ask her to meet him in Kensington Gardens, I'll go and pick enough gooseberries for a pie."

"A letter!" exclaimed he. But he instantly added, with an indifference that must have disappointed Mrs. Hassock sadly, "what an absurd ado about nothing! I suppose you have the letter if Ellen has the shilling; what would have been a handsome fee for carrying a letter up a flight of stairs? Give it to Miss Doyle at once, and don't dare to delay letters any more."

Mrs. Hassock, with doubled dignity, left the room. But it does not follow that any airs of indifference on the part of a mereman, however well assumed, deceived her longer than it took her to go upstairs and say:

"A letter for you, miss, if you please."

The very first letter Phoebe had ever received.

It was a commonplace-looking letter enough, except that the exceptional commonness of its envelope made it look like a small shopkeeper's bill rather than one of those communications that are delivered to young ladies with a piquant touch of mystery.

Phoebe had sometimes opened bills, but she knew perfectly well that this was no bill as soon as it touched her fingers. Bills do not smell of musk or patchouli, and for the same reason she knew that it did not come from any of the Nelson family. She took it with a "Thank you, Mrs. Hassock," but not without a flush of excited curiosity that made the old lady look between the lines, and read, by the light of experience, a great deal that was not there. As soon as she was alone, Phoebe opened her first letter and read:

"Angele of my Leif, and Queen of my Sol! Wat is this Mistere meen? I loose you of the garden, I feind you to the Drama. If you love me, it is all right; but if you love me not, it is Revenge! I call you to remind, I have killed a man. The nearest time, I shall kill three. If you meat me not rount the corner of Keswick Place, at three hours Friday afternoon, I shall kill first him, and then you, and then me. But I am just and brave; I will once know if we deserve. You are mein. And I am
ADRIANSKI."

And she had been forgetting hero's very existence, even in her dreams; except,

indeed, when something unpleasantly reminded her of her first theatre. But this was a page out of a real play! Suicide and murder, it was terrible; but Phoebe felt, at last, that life was not going to be a wholly empty thing. She placed the letter in her bosom, according to rule, and, with beating heart, considered what stage law called upon her to do. She was still considering when the lunch-bell rang, and uncomfortably reminded her that her father had not gone out that day. She would have to meet him, as if nothing had happened, but with a secret on her heart. It was a golden situation; one to be proud of figuring in for ever. And yet she wished that lunch had not been ready quite so soon.

WANDERINGS IN SUSSEX.

IT has so happened that a great deal of my life has been spent at various times in the county of Sussex, and I have endeavoured to make a somewhat systematic exploration of the grand old county. It very much reminds me of the description which Thucydides gives of Athens, which, he tells us, was peopled by men of the plain, men of the hills, and men of the seashore. The natural divisions of Sussex exactly correspond. There are the people of the great weald or plain, the people of the downs or hills, and the maritime population of the seaside.

There is yet another aspect in which I find the county full of interest. It seems to reflect different phases of English history and social life. Certainly, in its great watering-place of Brighton, it shows us the most modern and momentous characteristics of contemporary manners. Brighton is to other watering-places what the Boulevard des Italiens is to other parts of Paris. It is a suburb of London, in the height of the season—in November—its gayest and most popular suburb, or rather London-super-Mare itself. All through the year there is a wonderful vitality about Brighton, a kind of high-water mark which is hardly maintained anywhere else. East and west there are watering-places of great pretensions, and also of very great merit. Eastbourne, for instance, increases in proportion as rapidly as Brighton itself. But the rural districts of Sussex, which were once full of iron-works, are now intensely rural everywhere outside the towns, and abound with scenes of most soothing rest and quietude, with

primitive people, and old-fashioned ways, with wonderful glimpses of pastoral and woodland scenery, with the noble loneliness of hills and sea.

I might speak of some magnificent modern structures in Sussex. Such would be some great public schools which have been erected, and chief of all the vast Carthusian monastery at Cowfold, now rapidly approaching completion, which will surpass the glories of Christ Church, Oxford, or Trinity College, Cambridge. Then there are many show places well worth visiting and describing, such as the castles of Hurstmonceaux and Bodiam, the art palaces of Petworth and Parham; but here I would rather speak of some devious, careless rambles, in which I followed my own wayward will instead of the course of fashionable visitors and tourists.

I remember the time when, wandering about Sussex on foot, one met with very sorry accommodation. The cheese was rough, the beer was bad, the bacon salt and indigestible. The belated tourist, if obliged to turn in at a wayside inn, hardly found the inn's proverbial welcome. He was not wanted or expected. I have been glad to sleep on the parlour sofa of the hardest horsehair. There was nothing worth mentioning in the way of attendance. In the morning, if you wanted to tub, your demand was received with scorn and incredulity. Of course I am not speaking of inns on the regular line of roads, for at these there has never, in my time, failed to be good accommodation for man and beast, but in those remoter regions where only such a wanderer as myself was likely to penetrate. But again and again in Sussex, within recent date, I have found coffee-houses and reading-rooms even in what seem unlikely localities. I am writing these lines in one of these places. I have been partaking of those fruit essences which the French drink so much, when the English people would be drinking beer and gin. I only pay a penny for a large tumbler of fruit essence and water. A working-man has just dropped in, and asks for a pint of tea. That will cost him threepence. If he added an egg and bread-and-butter it would only cost him threepence more. I observe that working-men can have their cans filled with tea, coffee, and cocoa. A chop or steak can be brought in and cooked at the charge of one penny. Pen, ink, and paper are furnished at the charge of one penny. Soup is sold by the basin and the pint, and the charge never goes beyond a

penny. The pleasant room is plentifully furnished with periodicals, and the efforts made to promote cleanliness and comfort are most successful. Perhaps it is only fair to say that the place of which I am speaking is at Hayward's Heath, close to the railway-station. The pretty secluded village of Crawley shows an advance even upon this. Crawley is a place eminently worth visiting. It opens up the way to some of the most genuine forest country that is left in Sussex. In the neighbouring church of Worth we have one of the most perfect examples of the architecture of a parish church to be found in England. Now this village of Crawley has a perfectly excellent institution. It has all the cheap wholesome eating and drinking that can be desired. Moreover, it has some excellent dormitories, where a good bedroom can be obtained at less than a shilling a night. These improvements belong not to large centres of population, where philanthropic people set up coffee-palaces, but to rural districts, where they are beginning to supersede the beer-house and the gin-shop.

It is really wonderful how soon you can get away from London, and in less than a couple of hours find yourself in lovely scenery as simple and primeval as that of Westmoreland and Cumberland. Get out at Hassock's Gate, for instance. A moderate walk takes you to the entrance of the Clayton Tunnel, where such a terrific accident happened not so many years ago. The train you have left plunges beneath the downs where the London road goes over them. As you turn either to the right or left, you may find some little village nestling on the combes, or you continue your walk along the ridge of downs. For long stretches of many miles you have profound solitude. You may hear the sheep nibbling the sweet thymy pastures which give the South-down mutton its peculiar flavour; you see the small circular ponds where the sheep come to drink; and here and there, very seldom, there is a tuft of trees, much more frequently only briar-bushes. In the deep cool caverns of the chalky downs is vast storage of the purest water in the world. The local companies tap them for the larger villages in the neighbourhood, and it is almost worth while to live in one of these villages for the sake of the water alone. In the hottest day of summer the water is as cool as if it were moderately iced.

In the combes of the downs the parish churches cluster thickly. The old manner survives. It is very pleasant to see the

old men come in their smock frocks to church. They like their bit of gossip in the churchyard, and they think all the better and none the worse of the sermon that sends them to sleep. I am afraid that the worst thing against the Sussex peasant is that he is decidedly beery, though, as I have said, the cheap refreshment places are in various districts seeking to cope with this evil. Of all the labourers the shepherds are the quaintest and most picturesque, and, I think, also, the worthiest and most deserving. You meet an astonishing number of persons who can neither read nor write, but the School Boards are busy even amid the downs, and the new generation will probably show the most decided advance that has been known in Sussex for generations. With all their simplicity the race is shrewd enough; they are perfectly aware of every advance in the price of labour, and many who subsist on the squire's charity in the winter will refuse to work for him in the summer, if they think that the wage is sixpence below the attainable price. When you come to questions of money, you are on a subject on which, as the great preacher Melville said, the most ignorant have their lore, and the dullest their acuteness.

In rambling about Sussex I go to all sorts of places, and in all times of the year. I move about in winter as well as in summer. My general rule is to avoid the beaten paths and the public haunts. It is not a bad plan to take the coach which runs between London and Brighton, and if any place strikes your fancy, to dismount and look about you, and spend a few hours or a few days in a locality that seems to please you.

Like the rest of the Brighton world I go to the Devil's Dyke, for the sake of the wonderful prospect. They seem to have given up the plan of a railway to the Dyke. Even in the depth of winter people go to the Dyke; it is, moreover, a great meet place in the hunting season. But, instead of returning to Brighton by the car, I plunge into the Weald. The noble church of Poynings, embowered in woods, at the base of the mighty down, is the point of attraction; but it is by no means an easy place to get at. It is curious, however, that even in the summer season one meets with so few people in the woodland lanes or in the meadows. Now and then you hear the quick movements and careless laughter of a happy riding-party, but this is very rare indeed. There are points of very great interest about Poynings which deservedly make it dear to the naturalist

and archæologist. As you pass by Newtimber, notice the noble moat of water that surrounds the place. The picture is very perfect of its kind. On this occasion I turn eastward, on a way which will ultimately bring me to the line of railway which runs parallel to the main London and Brighton route. I wish to see the sheet of water belonging to Knepp Castle, which is not only the largest sheet of water in Sussex, but also the largest south of the Thames. It spreads in an irregular form beyond a noble well-timbered lawn, and is exactly of the same extent as the Serpentine. Such a lake is most unusual for Sussex, where, indeed, there is a scarcity of water, which the landscape often seems to lack.

It may be as well to mention that Holbein's pictures, enumerated in Murray's Handbook, are not here, but have been transferred to West Grinstead House.

There is a solitary fragment remaining of old Knepp Castle, once a feudal castle associated with Bramber Castle. It is in a field, just off the high road—a massive remnant of the Keep Tower, with a Norman window and door arches. I was, however, on this occasion not so much studying the perishing glories of the past as the rising glories of the present. Only a few miles off is the parish of Cowfold, whose interesting church is overshadowed by the great Carthusian foundation which I have already mentioned. On two occasions I have visited, and carefully inspected, this wonderful edifice, or series of edifices. The good fathers were most courteous, and proffered their liqueur, the Chartreuse, out of the profits of which the new monastery and many charities have originated and are sustained. The Carthusian brethren feel that the new monastery is essentially their own property and their own home. For the Grande Chartreuse in Dauphiné they have to pay a rent to the State, and they seem to think that they have reason to fear that there may be an expulsion of their order, and the forfeiture of their mountain home. They have certainly shown their confidence in English institutions by embarking their fortunes on English soil. The Cowfold monastery will only be partially inhabited by monks and lay brethren so long as the parent institution in France is maintained. The monks are poorly fed, but they are magnificently housed. We are bound to say that they looked extremely

well on their meagre diet. For months together they taste no meat, and have little or nothing after their frugal mid-day repast. Once in a week they take a country walk. Once in a week they are permitted to have a free conversation. But each monk has his bedroom, his study, his sitting-room, his workshop, and his garden. The refectory, and the library, and the chapel are on the most magnificent scale. The length of cloisters is only inferior to that of St. Peter's at Rome. The grounds embrace several hundred acres. For many years there has been a little settlement before these magnificent structures were commenced. As the buildings are not formally opened, the rule of the order is not just now maintained. Ladies are freely permitted to see the buildings at present, but at the parent monastery, in France, their visits are placed under the greatest restriction, and they are uncomplimentarily reminded in the notice that is posted up of the evil which their sex wrought to Adam and Sampson and Solomon. Very interesting are these monks, who have perhaps passed from country to country throughout Europe, spending their lives in meditation and prayers for the multitudes who disregard and ignore them, and coming at last to the quiet Sussex fields to live and die among those who so little comprehend the secret of their austere sequestered lives.

When staying at Worthing it is very interesting to visit the old Roman encampment at Cissbury and the noble heights of Chanetonbury Down, on the summit of which a worthy squire planted seeds which he lived to see expand into the now famous grove or "ring," a fact which he has commemorated in graceful verse. Near this is the great domain of Wiston, the house and park, identified with the romantic and wonderful history of the three famous Shirley brothers. One of these, Anthony, discovered coffee at Aleppo, "a drink made of seed that will soon intoxicate the brain;" fought against the Portugese on the African coast; went out to Ispahan, and returned as the Shah of Persia's Ambassador to the Courts of Europe. Robert Shirley accompanied his brother to Persia; there he married a Circassian, was Persian Ambassador at Rome, wearing a crucifix stuck in his turban, visited paternal Wiston with his wife, and returned to die in his own Persian home. The eldest brother, after a life of wonderful changes, and not without a dash of Spanish knight-errantry,

sold Wiston and settled in the Isle of Wight.

The opening of the new railway, a few months ago, from Chichester to Midhurst, has opened up a very lovely country of hills, glades, and woods to those who, in search of scenery, do as much cheap travelling as they can by railway. One of the stations, Singleton, is the station for Goodwood, and it proved crowded and useful enough at the Goodwood Races. But I love best to visit Goodwood if only for its cedars of Lebanon—which are more numerous than on Lebanon itself—when the races are not going on. Getting out at Singleton I turn into the adjacent parish of West Dean, into scenes of wonderful pastoral beauty little known to tourists; such hills, such woods, such ravines! All the road to Midhurst shows lovely scenery, and Midhurst, with its woods and ruins of Cowdray, amply repaid me for the visit. From this line the two Lavingtons are easily accessible. South of Midhurst is the church of West Lavington, built on a terraced hill looking across the Downs; in the south-east end of the churchyard is the grave of Mr. Cobden. On the other hand, if you walk along the edge of the Downs, which gives a view of some of the finest scenery in the county, you come to Lavington, where Bishop Wilberforce is buried. Here was the bishop's country house. A curious fact is mentioned in Mr. Knox's book on Birds that when the powder-mills at Hounslow exploded, in 1850, all the pheasants in the Lavington woods, fifty miles off, crowed at once. Then we go on to the Roman remains at Bognor, and the stately house of the Howards at Arundel.

Arundel is a place which I often visit, and always with a renewed sense of enjoyment. There are delicious retreats about this place. I do not discuss the lordly castle rising above the sea of foliage, or the magnificent Roman Catholic church which the duke has built, or that ancient parish church about which there was so much litigation between the vicar and the duke. I take a boat on the Arun, and go up the stream to a pleasant hostel of which I know, whose lawns slope down to the water's edge. On the way I enter into conversation with some fishermen, who sell me some eels which they have just caught, and for which they ask a very moderate sum. It is just as well to secure a basis for a dinner, for, as I know by long experience, at the little Sussex inns

on the line of route I have indicated, you can get little else than bread and cheese, or, at the outside, eggs and bacon. When I was on the river last, ten years ago, the boatmen had captured hundred-weights of grey mullet. They complained, indeed, that they had caught too many. They would have made much more money if they had caught only half the quantity. From time to time the fishermen are able to kill an osprey that haunts the stream for the fish.

It is possible to get by water all the way from Arundel to London. A canal joins the rivers Arun and Rother with the Wey, and so with the Thames. One day I walked the half-dozen miles from Arundel to Amberley, "one of those picturesque old-world villages which may still be found; the aspect, however, would seem to vary with the seasons, for the local adage in winter is, 'Where do you belong?' 'To Amberley, God help us!' but in summer, 'To Amberley, where would you live?' The cottages here are unprofaned by civilising innovations; there is an old ruin; the farms are quaint and comfortable; the trout have not wholly deserted the Arun; cranberries may be gathered in the wild brook or marsh." Across these marshes I made my way on a path between osier-beds; the place, however, has a melancholy association. One day a poor man was here bitten by a snake or adder, and despite every care he died of the poison. It is very rarely, indeed, that such a bite proves fatal in this country—even the adder's bite being ordinarily curable. From thence we get down to the two Shorehams—Old Shoreham and New Shoreham. A curious chapter of political history belongs to New Shoreham in Sussex, which proved one of the first stages in the history of Parliamentary reform. The story is told at length in Mr. Trevelyan's recent work, *The Early History of Charles James Fox*. "There was a certain society at Shoreham which called itself by the name of the Christian Club, and took an oath upon the Four Evangelists. The principle of this evangelical association was that each member should be bribed on the square, and that none should receive a greater or smaller bribe than the rest of his friends. An Act of Parliament was passed which disfranchised the holy members of the club."

New Shoreham is now celebrated for its gardens, a great attraction to the pleasure-seekers of Brighton, but if you cross the

ferry to a strip of beach opposite, you find yourself on a wild lonely shore, with Brighton five miles to the left hand and Worthing five miles to the right. Three or four miles from Shoreham is Bramber, which is also famous in electioneering history. A writer in the *Sussex Archaeological Collections* says: "In 1768 a memorable contest took place, eighteen polling one way and sixteen another, and one of the tenants of the miserable cottages refused one thousand pounds for his vote." It would be interesting to know whether this elector merely wished to raise the price of his vote, or was animated by the purest patriotism.

In Sussex the new and the old commingle. For the most part the old holds its own. But there are some districts which are entirely new. Perhaps the most striking example of this is Burgess Hill. Within the memory of many living people the whole district was a wild common, known as St. John's Common, with only a few scattered cottages. It formed part of the parish of a little church which nestled miles away under the brow of the downs. It has now expanded with the rapidity of an American township. It had once a little roadside station most charming and picturesque in its way, but this is superseded by a structure which reminds us of the Metropolitan Underground.

The Weald at Burgess Hill rises into a noble ridge, whence its name, along which there is a succession of pleasant villas embowered in gardens, and roses that love the clay are found in boundless profusion in their season. Burgess Hill owns the unenviable distinction of being the only place in all Sussex where the tall manufacturing chimney arises. Brick-works abound here, including the fine terracotta works, and have introduced a large population of labourers, whose cottages on the common contrast strongly with the villas of the suburban gentry on the Hill. A church, Board schools, rows of shops, Institute, Local Board, have all sprung up, and in a few years a district that was almost a moor has become a parish—almost a town. The very next station to Burgess Hill, up the line, exhibits something very similar, though not to the same extent. This is known as St. Wilfred's parish, St. Wilfred being the patron saint of the diocese, and the parish being the centre of the county.

But many are the quiet lanes, breezy commons, delicious woods, and interesting localities to be found in the immediate

neighbourhood of Burgess Hill and Hayward's Heath. The proper rule is, as soon as you arrive at either station, to get away from it as far and as fast as you can. There is Balcombe Pond, and Bolney Pond, and Slaugham Pond, all pleasant secluded sheets of water; and old Oak Hall, with its high stacks of chimneys, once the residence of the famous Selina, Countess of Huntingdon; and handsome churches that have adopted the hospitable custom of having open portals all day long, and many other interesting places of which it would not be difficult to give a "catalogue raisonné."

The study of Sussex manners and customs is extremely interesting. In the leisurely reading of pleasant fiction we find that Sussex is favourite ground for the order of contemplative and idyllic novelists. They study the landscapes in the same way as the artists do who reproduce them so faithfully on the walls of the Academy. Certainly, in the combination of the sea-board, the downs, the weald, and the forest-lands, the choice of subjects is absolutely inexhaustible. The character of the Sussex people is similarly exhibited by the cycle of Sussex novelists. The enemies of Sussex delight to speak of it as the *Boeotia* of England. To some extent, we Sussex people must admit the unsoft impeachment. As a rule, our ideas are limited and our vocabulary is scanty. A few hundred words will satisfy the literary needs of the Sussex peasant. But though the bucolic Sussex folk may be stupid, they are not wicked. They are ignorant and prejudiced and gossiping, but they are also patient and shrewd and kind-hearted. They have the greatest contempt for people who settle in the shires, or the "sheres," as they prefer to pronounce it. The people in the shires are a heathen and outlandish race. A friend asked after a certain John, who had left his Sussex village. "He be gone into one of the sheres—into foreign parts."

It must be admitted that we are often intensely stupid. A Sussex butcher is reported to have asked another: "What do those Parliament chaps mean by 'Divide, divide'?" "Why, of course it means 'Divide the taxes,' to be sure! You don't suppose that they take all that bother to get into Parliament, and don't see their way to get their money out of it?"

One day a Sussex servant-girl told me that she wanted to go into the town to buy something for her mistress. I happened to ask her what she wanted. She told me

her mistress wanted her to buy a pumpkin. I said I thought that there must be some mistake. Before the girl left the room she turned round and said that she now recollected that it was not a pumpkin, but a bumpkin, that was wanted. I answered, as gravely as I could, that her mistress had a bumpkin in the house already, and I did not think that she required another. The irony was not at all suspected, and the girl eventually discovered that "a bodkin" was the article required.

Sussex folk lay great stress upon the last syllables, which ordinary pronunciation passes lightly over. "Sure-ly, Master Small be a very old man. He lives at Arding-ly."

I am not sure, however, that some writers have not placed too great stress on the peculiarities of the Sussex peasant. For I agree with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who said that she had travelled over a good deal of the world, and thought that human beings consisted of only two classes—men and women.

A VISIT TO THE ENFIDA.

WHILE paying a visit to Tunis in the spring of the present year, I found all the world there much occupied with the affair of the Great Enfida Estate.

Most people are now familiar with the details of the case; but, for the benefit of those who are not, I may briefly state that the "Enfida" is a vast tract of land situated some distance to the south of the city of Tunis. It was formerly Crown property, and was given by the Bey to his late Minister, Kheredine Pasha, in exchange for a life pension which had been bestowed on him in recognition of his services. When Kheredine left Tunis for Constantinople, he sold this estate, as well as his other possessions in the regency, to a certain French company known as the "Société Marseillaise." And here begins the great Enfida case, which has occupied the attention of so many and such widely different persons—from the Arab shepherd wandering with his flocks over the disputed land, up to the law officers of the English Crown.

According to the Mahomedan law, when an estate is sold, any person who is part owner of the same, or who possesses property immediately adjoining it, may claim precedence over all other purchasers should he think fit to buy; but, oddly enough, he can only claim this right of pre-emption, which is called in Arabic

"Sheffaa," after the first sale of the property has been arranged and a portion of the purchase-money paid down.

Then he steps in and says: "I will give you the same price that So-and-so has paid, and I claim the right to buy."

It would be out of place here to dwell upon the facts and details of this particular case, which have been, moreover, widely made known to English readers through the medium of the Press. All the world knows, more or less, how an English subject named Levy, native of Gibraltar, having property contiguous to the Enfida, advanced his right of Sheffaa, and how it was disputed by the Société Marseillaise, and how the whole thing became a source of heart-burning and international jealousy.

But all the world does not know exactly what the Enfida is like, nor what sort of people live there, nor how they live, and therefore it is that I propose to tell what I saw there.

I had made Mr. Levy's acquaintance through some friends in Tunis, and had been much interested by him. He appeared to me to be a man of extraordinary energy and courage; keen, but, withal, very charitable and kindly; and, in fact, it is the possession of these combined qualities which has gained him the respect and cordial confidence which he enjoys among the Arabs.

One day, at Tunis, the conversation ran upon the rapid and adventurous journeys often performed by Mr. Levy and his Maltese servant, Schembri; and the incident was related how he had, on the occasion of taking possession of the Enfida, made the journey thither—which for ordinary travellers occupies the best part of two days—in less than ten hours, by sending forward relays of his famous Arab horses, and going full gallop all the way.

"How I should like to make such a journey!" exclaimed my companion, whom I will call M.

"Well, you shall if you like," replied Levy. "I am going down to-morrow, and will take you with me if you are not afraid of roughing it."

Our friends shook their heads doubtfully, for M., although not wanting in courage for a lady, is not of amazonian build, and we were warned that we should find that roughing it in Europe, to which we declared we were quite accustomed, was rather different from roughing it in Africa. In the latter continent there was, for instance, an inconvenient scarcity of roads—

things which we had perhaps hitherto considered indispensable to the performance of a long journey on wheels.

But the idea had taken possession of our minds, and when, at dinner-time the same night, a line was brought to M.: "Do you really wish to go? Tell me frankly. I start at two to-morrow," the reply, scribbled immediately on the back of the note, was: "Certainly, I mean to go; and shall bring no luggage but a hand-bag."

"That is the first point on which to tranquilise the mind of a man with whom you are going to travel," said M., displaying the wisdom of the serpent. "Now he will begin to have some confidence in me as a traveller."

Punctually at the hour named, the carriages came to the door next day. At starting, our little caravan consisted of two carriages, one a roomy vehicle of nondescript build, and the other a strong but very light victoria, hung rather high, to which four beautiful dark-grey Arab horses were harnessed abreast.

Having been told that we should sleep that night at the inn at Birbuita, we were rather surprised to see the larger carriage containing pillows, coverlets, stout burnous, a large basket of eatables, tin camp-kettle with lamp, and other preparations apparently for camping out.

But our host smiled and said that the traveller who did not take his own supper and bed with him to the "inn" at Birbuita might chance to fare badly.

On leaving Tunis, we proceeded for some distance along a tolerably good road to a place called Hammam-el-Iff, where there are mineral springs, much frequented from January until about April, both by Moors and Europeans. There are bathing-houses and drinking-fountains at this place; the waters, of which there are two or three qualities, being used internally and externally.

Near this spot we met a string of camels, whose burden, glittering and shining with the slow rocking movement of the animals, drew an exclamation of admiration from us. It looked at a little distance like fine old majolica ware, the predominating colours being the beautiful harmonious greens and exquisite yellows which we see in the best specimens. But it was neither more nor less than common native pottery, fashioned in the rudest manner and glazed with lead. This pottery is made at a little place called Nabel, which supplies all the country round.

I have said that it was rudely fashioned, but I should add that in many instances the forms could hardly have been improved upon, having evidently been reproduced on the old models for hundreds, nay, thousands of years, and some of these being the simplest and most elegant forms of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman art.

A mountain of beautiful and peculiar form, which had for some time seemed quite near us, but was still, in reality, many miles from this point, contains valuable lead mines. Indeed, the mineral riches of all this part of the regency are very considerable.

Presently we crossed a stony track, which we were surprised to hear bore the name of Wad-Melian (in Arabic, "The Full River").

"I should never have guessed it to be a river," said M., "still less a full one!"

But we were informed that it had been full enough, not many weeks before, to sweep away in its current a carriage and a pair of horses, and to drown the driver.

In all the regency of Tunis there is but one river, properly so called; that is to say, but one which never runs quite dry—the Medjerda, which, rising in the mountains of Algeria, and emptying itself into the sea east of Biserta, lay far away from our present route. But of these water-courses, which are full and even overflowing in the rainy season (in those years when, happily for the country, there is a rainy season), there are many.

The apparently inexhaustible fertility of this portion of North Africa seems as great as it was two thousand years ago, when Carthage was the granary of half the world. No scientific farming is employed, the ground is just scratched, and the seed sown, and then, if there is rain, up comes the harvest abundantly. That is the sole condition, that it should rain in the winter and early spring.

The spring of this year was exceptionally wet, and when we had grumbled and shivered a little, not expecting grey skies in Africa, we had been told that it was a fortune to the country, for that a dry winter meant great scarcity, and two or three successive dry seasons meant famine. Hence there are numerous local sayings and proverbs having reference to the desired blessing, one of which struck me as being a good specimen of the Arab sense of humour and irony, which is very keen: "If it rains every day, it is too much, but every other day is not enough." The more matter-of-fact spirits will often

repeat: "In Tunis we want nothing but rain and peace."

Soon after leaving Hammam-el-Iff the road changes for the worse, or rather there is no longer any road at all, as we understand the word in Europe, and the gallant little horses spring forward over large loose stones, heavy sandy ruts, and anon flounder through tracts of mud. Such alternations, continued for miles together, would have tried the courage of most horses that I know, but to these appear trifles not to be considered in the day's work, and on we galloped with unabated speed.

The monotonous treeless landscape of this part of Africa, with its lines of mother-of-pearl coloured mountains in the far distance, has a certain melancholy charm of its own, and as we gradually drew away from any human habitation, or, indeed, from any sign of man's handiwork, except the tomb of a saint occasionally gleaming whitely from out a thicket of prickly pears, we could enjoy undisturbed the beautifying influence of the sunset light on everything. How precious then became every hillock and furze-bush—almost every pebble!—with its patch of shadow so intensely blue or purple that it was difficult to believe it a mere effect of light and shade, and not a stain of actual colour on the ground.

Night had already fallen when we reached Birbuita, so that we did not then see the ancient well from which it takes its name. Birbuita signifies "the Chamber in the Well;" and there is, in fact, close to the caravanserai a large and very deep well, containing an inner chamber, the masonry of which is of great antiquity.

The necessity for our host's provident precautions soon became manifest.

On the carriage stopping, Arabs came forth with lights to welcome us, and we were conducted up a rough stone staircase, to a kind of little inner court, open to the sky. The doors of our various sleeping-apartments opened into this court, and in one of them we ate our supper. The chambers had bare walls, roughly white-washed, a floor of beaten earth, and, for all furniture, two wooden benches, on which were spread some rough Bedouin coverlets. A rickety table was soon produced, however, and one chair, into which M. was unanimously voted. We made our coffee and ate our supper merrily by the light of candles which we had brought with us, and which were made to stand

upright by the simple process of melting the flat end sufficiently to make it stick firmly to the table.

We were tired with the long afternoon's jolting, and the fresh March evening air had disposed us for sleep, to which we looked forward all the more complacently for knowing that we were to be called again at three. But here we had, indeed, reckoned without our host—I should rather say our numerous hosts—of fleas! I have a certain acquaintance with the fleas of several European countries, and had always, when calmly reviewing the subject in my own mind, been disposed to award the palm to those of Rome and Venice; the former for their attack in compact heavy bodies, and the latter for unexampled agility and power of surprise. But both must sink into insignificance before the fleas of Birbuita. We had eschewed the Bedouin coverlets, retaining only our own cloaks and burnous; but the Birbuitan flea has a peculiar gift of remaining on a bare wooden plank invisible to the naked eye, until the unwary traveller stretches himself thereon to slumber. Then the attack begins from all sides at once, with a vigour, a determination, and a continual pouring in of fresh troops, which soon convince the victim that there is no middle course between martyrdom and flight. There was another slight drawback to perfect tranquillity in the shape of numerous unknown insects of gigantic size, and with an undue allowance of legs, which patrolled the walls and the floor.

These, we were told, would not attack us, but they exercised a horrible fascination over poor M., who declared that she felt obliged to watch them all night to see what their intentions might really be; and that, as far as preventing sleep was concerned, they were "even worse than the fleas." In short, we found that a night at Birbuita was a thing to be remembered.

Our fitful slumbers were put an end to in the morning by a horrible roaring and growling. What was it? Not lions, surely? M. had expressed a wish to enter the lion country, but had been told there were none nearer than the Algerian frontier, quite away from our present route, and that even there they were not plentiful. It appeared improbable that they had come into the interior of the regency, out of compliment to us. No; it could not be lions. Besides, the noise seemed to be quite close to us. We listened again, and seemed to catch a familiar note. Oh! of

course; camels! We ought to have recognised the sound with which we had become tolerably familiar in Egypt; but we had never before been suddenly aroused by it at half-past three a.m., nor had we ever heard it on quite such a grand scale. Descending to the lower storey by the bright African starlight, we found two large courtyards, surrounded by open arcades, tenanted by a caravan which had arrived during the night.

The drivers were rousing and reloading their camels, and many of the latter were objecting to being afoot again so early.

Whoever has heard the harsh roar of a camel when angry, or when calling to its companions, can imagine the effect produced by a couple of dozen or so, in an echoing courtyard surrounded by open arches.

We started again when the stars were disappearing and the sky whitening for the dawn; and at first we seemed to be speeding forward as in a dream, over the level country. We could not perceive that we were following any road; the faint track beaten out by the feet of passing caravans, or occasional horsemen, was not yet visible; no sign of life was around us; the cold still air made us glad to lie back in the carriage, wrapped in our fur-lined cloaks; yet away we flew, as if under the spell of a dream-impulse, the endless plain seeming to draw us on and on.

Suddenly the clear sky turns to a yellowish-white, a dazzling spark appears on the horizon, and then up comes the bright sun in his strength, and all is changed. The myriad wild flowers of the African plain lift their heads, and turn their bright faces to the east; a light breeze springs up and waves the patches of green corn—already knee-deep; birds run along the sandy ground, from which they are hardly distinguishable in colour, or flutter to the thorn-bushes, which in the distance assume the most delicate lilac-tints, although at this time of year they have neither flower nor leaf; and the mother-of-pearl coloured mountains far away become more opalescent than before.

The track led us past some ruins of great antiquity, known to the Arabs as The Tower of Five Lights, and again, further on, we saw the fragments of a bridge, or rather bridges, for two lines of ruined arches can just be traced, and the remains are called by the Arabs The Old Bridges. These span a wide tract of ground which now only dips slightly from the level, but

where formerly there was, probably, a stream of some volume. All the world knows what treasures for the antiquarian lie scattered over this part of Africa, but we had not the necessary antiquarian lore, nor, upon this occasion, the time to examine the ruins which lay in our path. Our goal was Dar-el-Bey, the scene of the now historical dispute; and about an hour's brisk trot from Birbuita, we crossed the famous "neutral line," and entered on the Enfida territory. The estate was here bounded, far away on our left, by the high road to Susa, and still farther away on our right, by the distant range of mountains. There was no visible line of demarcation where we passed the "neutral line, one metre in width" (which Kherdine drew round the territory in order to neutralise the right of Sheffia, and which was, in its turn, neutralised by the fact of Mr. Levy possessing olive gardens and other properties within the boundaries), but its limits are as well known and, to native eyes, as clearly defined as if marked out by the highest of hedges.

So this is the Enfida! A vast level plain of rich alluvial soil* stretching as far as, and farther than, the eye can reach. The land is nearly all good and capable of cultivation, but every dip or hollow which causes water to lie in the rainy season is priceless. On such spots you may gather in, if you choose, three harvests in the year. But the greater portion of the vast territory is let out to small Arab cultivators who, once assured of enough food for the coming winter, are content to fold their hands until seed-time shall come round again. The ground is let out by the "mëshia," which is as much ground as a pair of horses or oxen, or one camel, can plough in a season.

In the case of Government concessions, or land sold to foreigners, the mëshia is calculated to be ten hectares. In small properties, where there are wells on the estates, the measurement is made with cords, but, as may be imagined, the mëshia is of very uncertain extent.

We passed one or two ancient stone wells, in which some muddy or brackish water may always be found, but they are very few and far between, and this scarcity of water explains the absence of any settled communities in all this fertile district, and makes the necessity of tent life for the

tillers of the soil at once apparent. In very dry seasons, large tracts must remain altogether uncultivated; and when the tenant-farmer may find it necessary from one season to another to seek "fresh fields and pastures new," and to go many miles in search of them, it is evidently desirable that not only the man but his house should be moveable. Dotted here and there over the immense plain, we saw little groups of black Bedouin tents, for at that time of year, although the corn is all sown and springing, there is still here and there a good deal of fresh pasture and food for the oxen and camels which have ploughed the land, and for countless herds of sheep. These we came upon from time to time, in care of a solitary shepherd or herdsman, with his one garment of coarse brown or white woollen stuff, and the gun slung behind his shoulder, and leaning on a long pointed staff, looking exactly like a figure out of an illustrated family Bible.

As our object was not to traverse the Enfida in all its length and breadth, we embraced the offer made to us of turning off to visit the property of Mr. Levy which adjoins it, which is known as the Suàeh, from the name of a saint whose tomb is on the property. Nothing is more striking in these sparsely-inhabited districts, than the number of these edifices and the immense veneration in which they are held by all. It is considered that it must bring good fortune even to an unbeliever to possess one of these relics on his estate, but woe be unto him who should destroy or desecrate it. At the little group of huts which form the central farm-buildings on the Suàeh estate we found an interesting patriarchal group, the head of which was a woman. In a country where the habits and religion of the people make the subjection, and one might say, the nullity of women a matter of course, it was curious to find how by sheer force of character and native intelligence, the old woman in question—she was seventy years of age, and a great-grandmother—ruled absolutely over her surroundings.

At first sight she was simply a brown, wrinkled, grey-haired hag; dressed in a single garment of dark-blue cotton stuffs, with a kerchief twisted round her head, and a larger one of a thin black material crossing it on the top of the head, and falling behind on to the shoulders, like a veil. But on studying the face a little, the remains of great beauty were visible in the delicate high profile and

* Enfida is derived from "En faid," the deposit left by a river, or land on which a river has overflowed.

intense dark eye; while the grace and freedom of her movements, and their elasticity in spite of her seventy years, were admirable. After partaking of some simple refreshment, we were asked to go round to see all the family, and some younger women came shyly peeping round the wall of a rough farmyard adjoining the house. Bedouin women in the country do not go veiled, although they always draw the flowing ends of their headdress over the lower part of the face on the approach of a man not belonging to their tribe or family. M.'s arrival had excited quite a sensation among the women, and she was dragged off to be shown the interior of their dwellings. Their pride in living in a stone house seemed to be very great; a small recess with a low stone bench, serving for a bed-place, being evidently considered the height of city luxury. M. afterwards confessed, with some reluctance, that the polite reserve which we had hitherto admired among the Arabs, by no means extended to those of her own sex. They crowded eagerly round, examining her dress in all its details; lifting her veil, and even pulling at her hair to see if it were real, and to ascertain its length. Her gloves were especial objects of curiosity, and when it was found that they could be removed, she was begged to take them off. The hands thus disclosed happening to be small and delicate, and probably looking doubly so by contrast with their surroundings, there was a general exclamation, and one of the women, suddenly pushing up M.'s sleeve, laid her own brown tattooed hand and arm beside those of her English visitor. One of the young men of the family, who was standing in the doorway, gravely said something in Arabic which caused a shout of laughter. But perceiving that this close personal inspection was beginning to be embarrassing to the Ingleez, he immediately afterwards begged that his remark might be translated, lest M. should suppose his criticism to have been unfavourable. What he had said was: "Aye, aye, these are the hands to go and cut thorns with!" Cutting thorns is some of the hardest and roughest work which an Arab woman has to undertake. And he added, that "any joke served to amuse those good-for-nothing women, who certainly did not always make good use of their own hands." But the objects of his rebuke received it with smiles, and little tosses of the head, which indicated that they had read aright a certain twinkle of his

eye, which had also been very plain to us.

We now resumed our journey; and after crossing a little river called the Elmgénin, which divides the Suàeh estate from that of the Enfida, found ourselves once more upon the disputed territory.

From time to time we met small groups of mounted Arabs, and sometimes a single horseman, who, having spied the carriage from a distance almost incredible to our eyes, would come dashing across the plain to exchange greetings with its owner, and to ask the news. This, I observe, the Arab never loses an opportunity of doing, and this may serve to account for the almost miraculous way in which news travels in these regions, destitute as they are of railways, telegraphs, and even roads. On another occasion, far away in the direction of the mountains inhabited by the Khoomeer* tribes, I found the natives perfectly well informed of what was going on in Tunis, as well as in other parts of the regency.

In the presence of these knights errant M. was again able to indulge in enthusiastic admiration of the native good manners. And it was, indeed, very noticeable, that although the advent of a European woman in those parts was an unheard-of circumstance, she was never once regarded with anything like a fixed attention likely to be embarrassing, nor even with apparent curiosity. The politeness of the Arab has certainly not been overrated. And we found that the country Arab, the Bedouin, has even finer and more dignified manners than his brethren of the town.

It appeared, however, that our nationality was invariably demanded of our host, and as invariably, on its transpiring that we were Ingleez, and that we had come especially to see the Enfida, a desire was manifested to make us welcome, and to show us all possible cordiality.

The Arabs inhabiting the Enfida are known under the collective name of Ouàled-es-Said,† and are subdivided into several tribes. The chief of one of these, a certain Mohamed-ben-et-Tabet, sheik of the Ouàled Abdallah, interested us considerably. Not to speak of wonderful exploits in "reeving" or "lifting" the cattle and camels of any tribe with whom

* * The true sound of this word it is impossible to represent in English letters. The Kh stands for a strong guttural. The name of the tribes has been incorrectly written in most European publications, following the French orthography, as Kroumir.

† Sons of the Happy.

he was at variance, which were recounted to us, and which are all fair in Arab warfare, he had distinguished himself during the revolution of '64, fighting on the side of the Bey's government, and had rendered invaluable services in bringing the revolted tribes to order, by his dashing bravery and great personal influence.

He was a fine intelligent-looking man, with a remarkably winning smile, and certainly gave us the impression that he would be no contemptible ally.

After the first compliments he wished us to be told that if the English and French fought about the Enfida (an idea which was rather prevalent among the Arabs then), he, Mohamed, should fight with the English. We asked him "Why?" and he promptly said, because the English fought for justice and were willing to abide by the Bey's laws, that they did not come into the country wishing to seize it for their own, but would live side by side with the Arab like friends. He added abruptly: "Why don't you ask something of our Bey? The French are always asking, and are never content, but the Bey would grant more willingly anything which the English might ask, because we like to see you in our country."

Journeying onward, with Mohamed and one or two of his friends now cantering by the side of the carriage, we soon came in sight of a white speck—the famous Dar-el-Bey, the only stone building on the Enfida estate. It is, as its name imports, "the house of the Bey," and is one of several similar buildings scattered over the country, where the representatives of his highness put up when visiting remote districts for the collection of taxes, or the administration of justice.

On nearer approach we saw that it was a flat-roofed square building, with a little tower at each corner, the whole brilliantly white, making the large arched door and small square windows in the outer wall look black by comparison. A smaller building near at hand contained the well for supplying the house, on the flat roof of which a blindfolded horse was pacing round and round, attached to a large horizontal wheel, which was part of the machinery for pumping up the water.

We could not enter Dar-el-Bey, accompanied as we then were, for it was occupied by some of the Frenchmen who had assisted in forcibly expelling therefrom Mr. Levy's servant, Schembri, whom he

had left in possession; and we saw these men jealously eyeing our party from a little distance. We were hospitably entertained at luncheon under the goat's-hair-cloth tent of some of our Arab friends, the meal comprising some fresh milk, cheeses, and excellent coffee; and M., enthroned on a pile of cushions and burnous, handing round "the knife" to cut cheese, bread, and meat, alternately, declared that it was by far the best picnic she had ever assisted at, and that a tent had all kinds of advantages over a house!

Our return journey to Tunis differed only slightly from the outward one; one of the few incidents worth noting being that of an Arab woman who made her appearance at Birbuita, having come some distance from her tents, to see and touch the hand of the Englishwoman who had been to visit the Enfida.

PLAYER KINGS AND QUEENS.

THE players who personate kings are not always kings among the players. It often devolves, indeed, upon the actors of quite subordinate rank to represent the potentates of the drama. Such characters, for instance, as King Cymbeline and King Duncan can rarely have been undertaken by performers of any great distinction. Upon the stage Prince Hamlet is, of course, a far more important personage than King Claudius. One Sparks, a tragedian of the last century, long enjoyed the reputation of being the only actor "who did not make an insipid figure" in the part of Hamlet's uncle. A critic wrote of Mr. Sparks that he was "great in the soliloquy, respectable in every passion of the least importance, and, when stabbed, peculiarly happy in falling from the throne." This is something to be said of a player. Few representatives of Claudius, however, can have been so successful as Mr. Sparks in obtaining critical recognition of their exertions in the character. The king in Hamlet is generally held to be "a wretched part for an actor."

It was customary for the players to assign the characters of the kings of the theatre to one particular member of their company, endowed, probably, with physical advantages of an imposing kind, a certain natural majesty of aspect and of action. To old-fashioned tragedy, kings were as necessary as to packs of cards. The dramatic king might be an actual figure

borrowed from history, or a mere creation of the poet, such as the king in *The Maid's Tragedy*, of Beaumont and Fletcher, or in the *Love's Labour's Lost*, of Shakespeare. "He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me," says Hamlet upon the announcement of the arrival at Elsinore of the tragedians of the city. Some critics have been disposed to hold that the prince's speech had sardonic reference to the king then occupying the throne of Denmark. It is to be observed, however, that Hamlet proceeds to enumerate, as though greeting them with equal cordiality, the other members of the dramatic company: the adventurous knight, the lover, the humorous man, the clown, and the lady. And upon the entrance, in accordance with the stage direction, of "four or five players," "You are welcome, masters; welcome all," he cries, while particularly recognising one of the troop as his "old friend," and pleasantly noting the growth of his beard since last they had met. Was this the actor who was subsequently to personate the king in the tragedy of *The Mousetrap*—the image of a murder done in Vienna—the story extant and written in very choice Italian, Gonzago being the duke's name, and his wife's Baptista? It may be remarked that *The Mousetrap* was not an original work; that even in the time of King Claudius, adaptations were already in vogue at the performances before the court.

No doubt players and playwrights brought kings and queens upon the stage because the public enjoyed the proceeding, and demanded entertainment of the sort. Majesty has its theatrical side. Sovereigns are a portion of the pageantry of history; their careers, characters, deeds, and misdeeds becoming lawful subjects for dramatic exhibition and manipulation. Of the long list of monarchs who have, from time to time, sat upon the English throne, nearly all have found counterfeits presentment in the theatre. The illustrious, indeed, have always to pay the penalties attaching to their condition, to endure the fierce glare of publicity, and the expeditious fame adopts to perpetuate their memories; to submit themselves to the arts, in turn, of the portrait-painter, the statuary, the modeller in wax, and the theatrical performer.

Of the early monarchs who have appeared upon the scene, we owe to Shakespeare not only Cymbeline and Duncan, but also Lear,

the greatest of stage kings. Dryden produced a "dramatic opera," entitled, *King Arthur*, the British Worthy, Purcell supplying the music. The work has departed from the theatre long since, yet the grand scena, "Come if you dare," still lingers in concert-rooms, a favourite song with heroic tenors. *Bonduca* is a fine tragedy by Beaumont and Fletcher, the same royal heroine, under the name of Boadicea, appearing also in plays by Leonidas Glover and Charles Hopkins. *Athelwold* is a tragedy by Aaron Hill. Mason's *Elfrida* was presented upon the scene in an operatic form, with music by Giardini. *Edgar*, the English Monarch, and *King Edgar* and *Alfreda*, are plays written in the seventeenth century by Rymer and Ravenscroft respectively. *Edwy and Elgiva* is the title of an unsuccessful play by Madame D'Arblay. Sheridan Knowles dealt dramatically with the history of Alfred the Great, Mr. Macready personating that illustrious English monarch on the stage of Drury Lane, but the work did not enjoy many representations. And in Mrs. Barbauld's *Evenings at Home*, it need hardly be said, there will be found a little drama suited to performance by juvenile actors to overflowing nurseries, setting forth Alfred's misadventures in the neat-herd's hut, and his complete failure as a baker. Sir Henry Taylor's poetic drama of *Edwin the Fair* has escaped the footlights. Mr. Heraud has written sundry plays dealing with early British history, introducing royal personages of exceeding antiquity.

The Laureate's Harold has not yet obtained representation, nor has William the Conqueror appeared very distinctly upon the mimic scene. Cumberland produced a play called *The Battle of Hastings*, and there is a drama by Boyce having Harold for its title; but in neither of these works does the great Norman find occupation. He is constantly mentioned by the other personages, but he is not permitted corporeal introduction to the audience. William Rufus wears theatre shape only in a forgotten tragedy by Mr. Fitzball, produced long since at Covent Garden Theatre, and bearing the title of *Walter Tyrrell*. Of Henry the First and King Stephen the stage would seem to know nothing beyond what is related of the latter in Iago's drinking-song that proclaims him "a worthy peer," and specifies the exact cost of a certain important portion of his dress. For dramatic portrayal of Henry the Second we must turn to Addison's opera of

Rosamund and to a play by Hawkins, called *Henry and Rosamund*, published in 1749; but, as the title-page announces, "not acted, from the managers fearing that many passages would be applied to the unfortunate differences between George the Second and Frederick Prince of Wales." However, the play came upon the stage some five-and-twenty years later, when it was found that the significance of the work had been over-valued. *Henry and Rosamund* did not impress the public much or enjoy many representations. The pathetic legend of Fair Rosamund is scarcely known to the modern theatre, except in the form of burlesque or pantomime. In a travesty of the story by Mr. Burnand the performance of the character of Queen Eleanor by the late Mr. Robson at the Olympic Theatre provoked extraordinary applause. King John lives for ever in Shakespeare; but for the king's great brother and predecessor, strangely enough, the stage has done little: *Cœur de Lion* has inspired no poetic dramatist of repute. The royal crusader has been seen in the theatre only in adaptations of *Ivanhoe* and the *Talisman* of Scott; in a musical *Cœur de Lion* by Burgoyne, at Drury Lane, in 1786, when John Kemble played the king and attempted a song with only partial success; in another musical *Cœur de Lion* by Mac Nally, produced at Covent Garden the same year; and in the later opera of *Maid Marian*, by Planché and Bishop; Richard being then personated by Mr. T. P. Cooke, an actor but rarely entrusted with royal characters. Henry the Third knew for a while theatrical existence in a poetic five-act play, called *Thomas à Becket*, written by Douglas Jerrold, and produced upon the Surrey stage in 1830. Concerning Edward the First there is extant an early play by George Peale, bearing date 1593. Edward the Second owes dramatic existence to Marlowe's mighty lines. Of Edward the Third a glimpse is obtained in Ben Jonson's incomplete tragedy, *Mortimer's Fall*. A play called *Edward the Third*, with the *Fall of Mortimer*, Earl of March, attributed to Bancroft, appeared in 1690. We are now among the kings of Shakespeare; their names need not be enumerated.

To Edward the Fourth Heywood has devoted a play in two parts. The Richard the Third of the theatre has been too often Colley Cibber's rather than Shakespeare's. But what a mark the monarch has made in histrionic annals! What great

actors have delighted to assume the part, and what innumerable little ones! The closing scenes of the tragedy bring the Earl of Richmond for awhile in front of the footlights. For a full-length theatrical portrait of King Henry the Seventh, we have to turn to Macklin's sorry play concerning the story of Perkin Warbeck, and entitled oddly enough, the historical period being considered, *The Popish Impostor*. But the work was hurriedly written and produced in 1746, with a hope that the public might apply the subject to the case of the young Pretender. The dulness of the treatment, however, outweighed the appositeness of the theme, and after a few performances of *The Popish Impostor* the theatre knew it no more. In addition to Shakespeare's portraiture of King Henry the Eighth, other presentments of the monarch have occurred in Mr. Tom Taylor's poetic tragedy of *Anna Boleyn*, in Mr. Raleigh's play of *Queen and Cardinal*, and in various melodramas, especially relative to the Windsor Forest Fables of *Herne the Hunter*. Pantomime and burlesque have also laid hands very freely indeed upon the person of Bluff King Hal; and Italian Opera has even pressed him into its service. Signori Lablache and Tamburini were wont to find fine opportunities for the display of their art when personating the portly Enrico of Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*. Henry's son, Edward the Sixth, appears not to have been of the slightest histrionic service.

The eldest daughter of King Henry the Eighth lived upon the stage in Tennyson's tragedy of *Queen Mary*. Until the advent of that work her majesty had hardly been seen in the theatre except, perhaps, in Mr. Tom Taylor's melodrama, *Twixt Axe and Crown*, founded in great part upon a German original by Madame Birch-Pfeiffer, which in its turn may have owed something to Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's popular novel, *The Tower of London*. The queen was also the heroine of Victor Hugo's great tragic play, *Marie Tudor*, and occasionally that play in a translated or adapted form has been seen upon the English stage. Years since it furnished Balfe with a libretto, and the Surrey Theatre with a melodrama. But the venue of the subject, so to speak, has always been changed; it was recognised that Victor Hugo's views of English history could not be made acceptable to an English audience; the play was made available here by altering its background, the plot was appropriated

but assigned a more remote situation; Queen Mary was made to assume the guise of a foreign sovereign—a Swedish queen or a Russian czarina. Queen Elizabeth, although for humorous reasons she was excluded from Mr. Puff's tragedy, *The Spanish Armada*, has trod the stage upon many occasions. Shakespeare exhibited her christening procession. She was seen as the Lady Elizabeth both in Tennyson's *Queen Mary*, and in Mr. Tom Taylor's *'Twixt Axe and Crown*. She appeared in a variety of seventeenth century tragedies: *The Albion Queens*, or, *the Death of Mary Queen of Scots*, and *The Unhappy Favourite*, or, *the Earl of Essex*, both works being by John Banks, and three plays dealing with the career of the Earl of Essex, by James Ralph, Henry Jones, and Henry Brooke respectively, all borrowed in part from the earlier production by John Banks. Schiller's *Mary Stuart* brings Elizabeth upon the scene, but only as a secondary character. For Madame Ristori, however, who had shone as *Mary Stuart* in an Italian version of Schiller's play, Signor Giacometti provided a tragedy, *Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra*, of which our virgin queen was quite the leading personage; and translations of the work have been seen upon the English stage. Elizabeth, of course, finds a part in all dramatic versions of Scott's *Kenilworth*, both serious and burlesque, and, no doubt, has figured in various minor plays and burlettas of which fame has kept no account. For the queen is, theatrically speaking, a strong and striking part which affords its representatives excellent histrionic opportunities. The great Mrs. Barry was a famous Elizabeth, and assuming that character, was wont to wear right royally the coronation robes of James the Second's queen; for, in times past, the kings and queens by divine right often bestowed their cast clothes and discarded finery upon their illegitimate kindred of the theatre. Mrs. Porter was also a distinguished Elizabeth in Banks's *Unhappy Favourite*; the play seems to have quitted the stage with that admired actress of the eighteenth century.

The sovereigns after Elizabeth have been less signally represented in the theatre. With the coming of the Stuarts, the drama began to decline in literary rank, and stage portraits to be limned by less able hands. History ceased to occupy the scene in the old grand way; poetry ebbed away from the playhouses, and plays sank to a

prosaic level. The blank verse now is often found to halt, and a bar-sinister blemishes the drama's coat of arms, betraying its illegitimacy. The James the First of the players is mainly derived from Scott's *Fortunes of Nigel*, rudely moulded into a dramatic form, although a more poetic play by the Rev. James White, dealing with the monarch as James the Sixth of Scotland, enjoyed favour for a while during Mr. Phelps's tenancy and management of Sadler's Wells. John Kemble now and then appeared as Charles the First, looking the part admirably as his portraits manifest, in a dreary tragedy by Havard the actor; Miss Mitford also produced a play having the hapless king for its hero. In later times Mr. Irving has portrayed Charles with special success in a tragedy by Mr. Wills. Cromwell hardly comes of right into this list, for his was not a crowned head. It may be noted, however, that he has often been seen upon the stage; as the king's rival in Mr. Wills's *Charles the First*, and also in a drama called *Buckingham* by the same writer; in a poetic tragedy by the late Colonel A. B. Richards; in theatrical versions of *Woodstock*, and probably in divers forgotten melodramas. M. Victor Hugo's colossal play of Cromwell may also be mentioned, and Alexandre Dumas's portraiture of both Charles and Cromwell in his *Vingt Ans Après*, and the play founded upon that historical romance.

Charles the Second has paced the stage in many works of slight constitution and small pretence, but no poetic dramatist has laboured on his account. He was a king much more suited to the purposes of comedy, or even of farce, than of tragedy. He could hardly look for grave or reverent treatment at the hands of the players, or, indeed, of any other class. Charles Kemble, however, endowed the Merry Monarch with grace, dignity, and good looks he could scarcely claim as strictly his due in the farce called *Charles the Second*, which Howard Payne borrowed from the little French drama *La Jeunesse de Henri V*. The same theme also furnished Drury Lane with a ballet, *Betty*, or *the Wags of Wapping*, in which Mdle. Sophie Fuoco was wont to dance, and Mr. George Macfarren with the libretto of his most successful opera. Charles has appeared in the plays which Douglas Jerrold, and, at a later date, Mr. Wills have founded upon the adventures of Nell Gwynne, and Mr. Charles Reade once pressed the

monarch into a forcible drama, *The King's Rival*, concerning the loves of Miss Stewart (the original Britannia of our coinage) and the Duke of Richmond, and bringing Mr. Pepys upon the stage to provide Mr. Toole with one of his earliest parts in a London theatre. And, of course, King Charles has been seen in stage versions of *Woodstock* and *Peveril of the Peak*, and in melodramatic traffickings with such subjects as *Old St. Paul's*, the *Plague* and the *Fire*, *Whitehall* and *Whitefriars*. Nor should the king's presence be forgotten in Mr. Planché's dainty little comedy of *Court Beauties*, with its living copies of the Hampton Court pictures by Lely and Kneller. Altogether, Charles the Second has been shone upon by the stage lamps as often, perhaps, as any other sovereign, although he has never been allotted such important histrionic duties and responsibilities as Poetry and Tragedy toil to provide.

The sovereigns after Charles have rarely shown themselves or been shown upon the scene. It would be difficult to bring home to the players any acquaintance with James the Second or with his son the Old Pretender. The romantic adventures of Prince Charles Edward, however, have been sometimes converted to dramatic use, if the stage has nothing known of that last of the Stuarts, the Cardinal of York, whom the inveterate Jacobites were pleased to entitle Henry the Ninth of England. Versions of *Waverley* at one time possessed the theatre, and Jacobite plots have been of service to many playwrights. In these works the young chevalier has now and then shown himself, although he may never have required to be personated by actors of the first class. With William and Mary the stage can boast little intimacy, though occasional dealing with the Massacre of Glencoe may have brought the king more or less near to the playhouse, and in Mr. Tom Taylor's melodrama of *Clancarty* the king himself for some few minutes was visible upon the scene. In his famous *Verre d'Eau*, M. Scribe dealt very freely with our good Queen Anne. Yet when the play was suited to our stage the dramatist's portrayal of her majesty was found not recognisable; it was deemed expedient to destroy the nationality of the sovereign; she was presented as the ruler of a foreign realm—German, or Spanish, or Portuguese. In the opera of *Marta*, a queen appears who is understood to be Queen Anne, but who is allowed to say and do little enough upon

the stage. The Heart of Midlothian dramatised exhibited, for a scene or two, a stage presentment of Queen Caroline, the wife of George the Second. The theatre—that is, the English theatre—knows no royalty of later date, if we may pass over Elliston's personation of George the Fourth when the coronation procession of that sovereign was brought upon the stage of Drury Lane as a spectacle. Parisian audiences have seen our Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Fourth, conducting himself very strangely indeed in dramas purporting to relate the stories of Edmund Kean, of Sheridan, or of Caroline of Brunswick. In an English version of the Kean of Alexandre Dumas, it was found necessary to convert the "Prince de Galles" of the original into a German princeling or grand duke.

The House of Hanover has not been brought upon our stage. It has been deemed expedient to consider the susceptibilities of the reigning family, or it may have been held that the Royal Georges do not present themselves as likely subjects for dramatic or histrionic treatment. Perhaps the more a ruler is constitutional, the less he is available for theatrical purposes. The stage loves a tyrant monarch whose will is law, whose proceedings are absolute and arbitrary. Under a parliamentary government, the player-king has but a poor part. The sovereign who can do no wrong, who can only act through his ministers, who can take little personal share or responsibility in the transactions of his reign, whose only speech is a speech from the throne, written for him by his premier, would figure but inefficiently in the theatre. Actors of position would probably refuse the part as "out of their line" or fit only for the subordinate members of the company. Moreover, the prejudices and prescriptions of the Lord Chamberlain have to be considered and conciliated, and that officer of state is known to be curiously sensitive concerning plays which approach modern events of political import or introduce august or eminent personages. It is, indeed, forbidden to represent living characters upon the stage, although the intention may be never so complimentary. The list of theatrical crowned heads is not likely, therefore, to be immediately increased by portrayals of our modern monarchs, although new personations of past kings and queens may, from time to time, be given to the stage.

THE QUESTION OF CAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOBY.

CHAPTER XXXIX. FACE TO FACE.

THE west lodge of Chesney Manor faced the prettily laid-out enclosure, within which stood the Catholic church and the house which Mr. Warrender had built for the use of the officiating priest. From the little garden, with its privet hedges, and the rustic porch, the west gate was plainly to be seen, and there was also a view of a picturesque bit of the park. The site of the church and the cottage had formerly made a portion of a fine wood which skirted a gentle curve past a long stretch of rising ground, and the small clearing was backed and bounded on both sides by the wood; leafless now, but still beautiful. The sun was shining on the cottage and the garden, and the long narrow windows of the little church were glittering in its rays. The doors of both church and cottage were open, and there was an unusual stir about the quiet scene. A couple of wheelbarrows under the charge of a couple of boys, and a light cart, drawn by an unmistakably pet donkey—the Jack so well beloved of Mrs. Masters's children—were stationed at the side of the church nearest to the cottage, and a tall grey-haired man, wearing a long black cassock and a black velvet skull-cap, and carrying a stumpy book under his arm, was superintending the unloading of the donkey-cart by Jack's driver. The contents of the three vehicles were flowers in pots, long shining garlands of holly and ivy, and other winter greenery, and these were all taken into the church.

"We are to go back for another load," said Jack's driver, "and I was to tell your reverence that Miss Rhodes and the young ladies are coming down at two o'clock."

Away went the man with the cart and the boys with the barrows, and the priest going with them to shut the gate, observed that a gentleman was standing on the pathway at a little distance. Not knowing whether the stranger meant to come in, or to pass on, the priest did not close the gate upon the barrows, but stood at it, waiting. There was a loitering uncertain air about this person, but the priest's attitude seemed to decide him, and, lifting his hat, he said:

"Mr. Moore, I think?"

"That is my name," answered the priest.

"You wish to see me? Will you walk in?"

"Thank you," said the stranger, complying with the invitation; "I am glad of an

opportunity of making your acquaintance. My name is Horndean."

Some desultory remarks followed, and Mr. Moore was leading the way to his house when Mr. Horndean, pausing at the open door of the church, asked permission to enter. They went in, and while the stranger looked about him at the unfamiliar scene, the priest knelt for a few moments in front of the altar.

The church was empty, save for a boy in the long coat of a sacristan who was busy about the altar-ornaments; and after a casual examination of its simple architecture and decoration, Mr. Horndean's inspection came to an end. Mr. Moore politely invited him into the adjoining house, but he preferred the open air, and was careful, while talking to the priest, not to lose sight of the gate and west avenue of Chesney Manor. Something was said of the season, and the decoration of the church, and Mr. Horndean politely expressed a hope that in future Mr. Moore would lay the shrubberies and gardens of Horndean under contribution.

"I am bountifully supplied for Christmas by Chesney Manor," said Mr. Moore; "but I am obliged for your kind offer, and may avail myself of it at Easter. You do not remain at Horndean for Christmas, I believe?"

"No. I am going away again, but soon to return. Then I hope we shall be good neighbours."

All this time he was intently watching the west gate of Chesney Manor.

Mr. Moore made a civil reply, and was secretly wondering what had brought Mr. Horndean, whom he had not once seen during the months of his sojourn at Horndean, to the retired nook at the Chesney west gate, when his unaccountable visitor took an abrupt leave of him, and walked away towards the skirt of the wood. At the same moment Mr. Moore caught sight of a group moving along the avenue of Chesney Manor, and immediately crossed the road to the west lodge to meet Miss Rhodes and her little pupils. They preceded the re-laden donkey-cart and wheelbarrows; and they were accompanied by their nurse. There was a good deal of news for Mr. Moore: Uncle John was coming presently, they might stay until it was growing dark, and mamma had ordered almost all the camelias to be cut for uncle's church on Christmas Day.

Miss Rhodes was rather silent and apathetic, and when she had hung up a few wreaths and given the boy in the long coat some directions, she excused herself on the

plea of having to get back to Mrs. Masters, and leaving the children with their nurse to await Mr. Warrender's arrival, she went away, accompanied to the gate by Mr. Moore. A side path through a plantation extending on the right of the gate lodge, led by a circuitous route to the house, and this was the way that Helen selected, with the object of avoiding Mr. Warrender. This had become her chief solicitude; not that anything on his part had made her position more difficult than before, but because she found the pain of it, the sense that to her would be due the breaking up of that happy home, the acute disappointment of her kind and generous friends, almost intolerable. This had such complete possession of her mind that the incident of the morning had faded in comparison; the thing was a puzzle, it might be a danger, but it was not that which was almost choking her; it was not that which made her feel the house a prison, and the faces she loved terrible. That morning, Helen had resolved upon appealing to Jane, and as she walked through the plantation, breathing freely because she was alone, and might indulge in all the trouble of her mind, undisturbed by a solicitous look to cut her as if with a keen reproach, she tried to arrange the sentences in which she should tell her friend how all that had been done for her peace and protection had come to nought.

"What wonder," she said to herself bitterly, and with smarting tears rolling slowly over her cheeks, "if they think me an unlucky, uncanny creature; not fit to help myself, and marring every endeavour to help me! What wonder if they should blame me because he loves me, if they should think that I have forgotten the wretched truth, and led him into this great mistake, evil, and sorrow."

She had been so absorbed in her thoughts, she had so entirely yielded to the relief of solitude, that she had not heeded the slight rustling on the side of the plantation near the park fence, which had accompanied her own steps, and now, seeing a neatly trimmed log of timber by the inner side of the path a little ahead of her, she quickened her steps, and seating herself upon it, gave unrestrained way to her tears. Presently they were checked, her startled attention was attracted by a stir among the trees in front of her, and a little packet fell at her feet. She started up, and looked around her in some alarm, but there was no one in sight, and she picked up the missile. It was addressed, in pencil, to "Miss Rhodes," and the sight

of the handwriting made her feel deadly faint. She sat down again, from sheer inability to stand, and, trembling from head to foot, she broke the seal. Not a word was written on the paper, but it enclosed the Apollo pin! The pin which Frank Lisle had given her, and she had returned to him with the false wedding-ring, the lying symbol of their pretended marriage; the pin which she knew had been in his hands since then! In a moment she understood that this was an announcement of his presence, of his proximity; that the mystery of the visitor at Horndean, who was not the Frank Lisle of her own sad story, but bore his name, was about to be cleared up. By whom? Whose hand was it by which her false lover had sent her that token of her old servitude? The pretty delicate ornament lay in her lap and her eyes gazed at it as though it were some loathsome object; her head reeled, that terrible vertigo which had once or twice before come to her with a shock, seized hold upon her; she stretched her hands down at either side of her, and tried to clutch the rugged bark of the log on which she was sitting, while the scene grew dim and distant, and a black pall hung itself before her eyes. The agony of surprise and terror might have lasted an age, or an instant, she knew not; with a deep gasping sigh she tried to rise to her feet, and fly from the spot, but her knees refused to support her, and she sank down again on the log. Only a few moments of this seemingly endless suffering passed, when Helen, looking up in deadly fear, saw, as if through a mist, a man standing before her. The man was Frank Lisle!

She uttered a dreadful, low, gasping cry, and hid her face in her hands.

"Don't be frightened," he said, and he, too, was pale, and his voice was strange; "and pray let me speak to you. I must. It is absolutely necessary for us both that I should. There is nothing to fear. For Heaven's sake do not shake like that."

She put a strong constraint upon herself and forced her lips to form words.

"What do you want with me? Why do you come here?"

"I want nothing but your forgiveness. I come here because I am forced to do so; because the truth must be told between you and me; because you must be made aware of who I am."

"Who are you?"

"I am Frederick Lorton Horndean."

She stared at him in blank terror and amazement; she uttered a faint sound, but

no articulate words; once more the blackness came before her eyes, and she would have fallen to the ground but for his sustaining arm. He held her in no gentle clasp; there was not the slightest suggestion of a caress in his touch; it was merely the aid of strength to weakness; and she rallied instantly, and shrank away from him with a movement which he did not attempt to contest.

"You are better now," he said, "and you will listen to me. It shall be for the last time. And you will believe what I say, I am sure, villain as you must hold me to be, and as I suppose I am. It was only last night that I learned, by a letter from Mrs. Stephenson, that you were living with Mrs. Masters at Chesney Manor. To-day, I came down to the church here, thinking that I might find some means of sending the token that would reveal my presence to you, and then write and entreat you to see me without any one's knowledge; but the priest was there, and he saw me. I had to talk to him, and to give up that plan. There was nothing for it but to follow you, and risk it."

She was listening to him, but it was as if in a dream. The crowd of recollections was too great, its whirl was too bewildering; her brain seemed to be burst and shattered by them; she could only realise that this man was Frank, and that she was suffering horrible pain.

"I am here to tell you the truth, and first, that I did not desert you as you believed."

Ah, yes; her mind was getting a little clearer. This was the man by whose false name she had been called; for whose coming she had vainly watched and waited through all those dreadful weeks; who had utterly wrecked her life. She made no attempt to speak, and she closed her eyes and covered them with her hands. Nevertheless he knew that she was listening to him.

"No, as Heaven is my witness, I did not. When I left you, I meant to return as I had promised and arranged; but I was seized with sudden illness the next day, and for several weeks I was either unconscious or helpless, and nobody knew where I was. When I returned to Paris, you were gone to England, I was told; at all events, you had placed yourself under the protection of your friends, and withdrawn yourself from mine. I don't excuse myself, I only explain. Circumstances hindered me from trying to get you back. It was better for us both."

"Did you mean to marry me when you returned to Paris?"

He hesitated, and with his hesitation her emotion vanished. She was quite calm as she waited for his reply.

"I—I will go back to the beginning, and tell you the truth. The day I met you at the Louvre, when I put you into a carriage, you gave as your address my sister's house. She and I had quarrelled, and I knew nothing of her doings just then; my curiosity was excited about her, my admiration was roused by you— She shrank so plainly from these words that he hurriedly begged her pardon and continued: "I contrived to meet you again, and as I did not want my sister to find out anything about me, and did want to do her an ill turn, I called myself by my friend Lisle's name, and tried to win your confidence in a false character."

"And succeeded. It was not very brave; I was only a girl, a miserable dependent in your sister's house."

"Don't think that I don't know how cowardly it was; but the wretched little excuse there was to offer I could not make now without offending you. I was living very recklessly at that time, gambling, and drinking, and doing all the things for doing which my guardian, Mr. Horndean, had so severely condemned me, and which were very likely to cost me the inheritance that he had promised me. There was just one thing which would have made my loss of it quite certain—a marriage unapproved by Mr. Horndean. That was the risk I could not incur, the penalty I could not face; in that you have the explanation of my conduct to you, execrable, I admit. It was not a deliberate plot; that is all I have to say for myself. When I left you at Neuilly to go to England, I was in hopes that the old man was dying, and that all would be safe. Had I reached England then, and had he died, I would have returned and made you my wife."

Mr. Horndean believed what he said. Needless to add that Helen believed it. But, while the assertion gave him a sensation of comfortable self-approval, it merely awoke in her the heartfelt sentiment: "Thank God for all that has happened, because it was not that."

"I need not repeat what did occur. Before Mr. Horndean died, you were gone, and then, I confess, I saw the extreme folly of what I had done, and I was glad, very glad, you had found honourable protection. We had both escaped a very great evil."

It had never, perhaps, befallen Frederick Lorton in his life before to have to say

anything so difficult of utterance as those latter sentences ; the meanness, the cruelty, and the falsehood they revealed were as evident to himself as to the girl who listened to him. But that girl was no longer the weak and childish creature whom he had deceived so easily. Nobler associations, and the forcing school of suffering had instructed her. She raised her head with supreme dignity, and said in a tone of cool command :

"Pass on from that part of your explanation, if you please."

He gave her a startled look, but he obeyed her.

"Your letter convinced me that the best safety for both of us was in leaving things as they were. I was summoned to England. Mr. Horndean was dead ; by the terms of his will I should have been disinherited if I had been a married man at the time of his death. And now, I have indeed to crave your pardon ; for I know I ought to have sought you out when I became my own master, and made you my wife, but——"

She calmly interrupted him.

"You had ceased to wish to do so, Mr. Horndean. I have at least reason to be grateful to you that you did not inflict that worst of injuries upon me. You need tell me no more ; I know that you are about to marry Miss Chevenix, whom I have seen, and all the consequences to me of that marriage are clearly before my mind."

"To you ! Surely it is impossible that you——" He hesitated, the strife of his contending passions was great.

"You would say that I have no part in the matter—that it is impossible I should love you still. You are right, that is quite impossible ; that, with all its suffering, has long been over. And I forgive you, quite fully, and freely ; you will be a very happy man if my wishes can avail. But there are consequences to me. I cannot remain here. I can neither reveal your secret, nor carry on false pretences to my friends. Miss Chevenix and Mrs. Townley Gore must soon learn that I am here ; and besides—don't mistake me—this must be the last meeting between you and me."

He was ashamed of himself—he was sorry for what he had done—he would have given a good deal of money never to have seen the face of Helen Rhodes, but a great irrepressible joy was awakened

in him by her words. She had said in a few words all that he had been laboriously planning how to say in many. The importance to him of secrecy, which he was at a loss how to insinuate without insult to her, had been perceived by her unassisted intelligence. He was saved, free, relieved from all dread of his beautiful Beatrix's jealousy, anger, or suspicion ; the haunting ghosts of the last night were laid.

And Helen ? What of her ? Only the old question, What was to become of her ? He said something of her future being his care, but she put it aside with indifference that was hardly even disdainful, and simply reiterating her assurance that he was forgiven, and that she would have left Chesney Manor before he brought his bride to Horndean, she begged him to leave her.

"I must have a little time to recover myself," she said, "and I shall be missed at the house. Good-bye, Mr. Horndean."

Even to his perception, so dimmed by vice, so dulled by selfishness, the nobility of the girl was striking. He felt something as near to reverence as he was capable of feeling, as he bowed low and turned away into the plantation. There was one point of resemblance in the respective states of mind of Helen and himself ; it was the impossibility that both felt of realising their former relation to each other. Between Frederick Lorton and the pure, gentle, lovely image of the girl whom he had loved and left so lightly, there interposed itself the splendid picture of Beatrix, the grand passion of his hitherto wasted life. Did anything come between her and the image of her false lost lover, as he was when Helen had loved and believed in him, to blur and confuse it in her mind's eye as she sat for a while where he had left her, trying to think, but fast losing the coherence and resolution which had come to her aid while he was there, and with a terrible consciousness of physical illness stealing over her ?

If there was any such thing, Helen did not know it.

When she reached the house she was surprised to find Mrs. Masters in the hall, and on the look-out for her.

A glance at her showed Helen that something unusual had happened.

"A charming surprise for you," said Mrs. Masters, taking her arm and giving it a warning squeeze. "Jane Merrick is here!"

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